Key Issues on Tourism Strategies

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Abstract

After an institutional request, strategic planning is usually promoted by teams coordinated by one expert in the field, by a firm or by a University. The day it is delivered there is a general feeling of frustration with the outcome. This feeling is most likely due to an incomplete diffusion process or/and to some difficulties to measure long term and intangible outcomes.

In this paper we intend to overcome some of these misinterpretations, reflecting on the mostly theoretical questions popping up from recent study cases; it is essentially centred upon the lived experiences and the methodological issues that only future will assess.

This paper is also an academic exercise to share with the regional science peers the life experiment we had during PETUR (Strategic Plan for Tourism in Serra Estrela - Portugal), the acronym of the work team I coordinated, which rose a number of practical questions that one should reflect upon under recent theoretical developments in social sciences involving decision and collective action. The paper is structured as follows: (1) a context introduction; (2) an international and national literature review considering then in more detail (3) some recent developments on innovation diffusion theories. The (4) section illustrates some of the initiatives we took in the case study for a the specific region in *Serra da Estrela*, an internal small region located in between the Portuguese Atlantic coast and the Spanish border; the (5) section is devoted to the main focus of the paper - key issues in tourism Strategies.

The paper will close with the concluding remarks where private-public partnership is mostly considered a complex learning process in order to excel in innovative diffusion processes.

Keywords: tourism economics; planning methodology; organizational complexity; cluster strategy; Portugal

JEL Classification: R58; L83; O22; L26; C61; H77

1. Brief context introduction

Tourism is being considered a vital sector for developing countries unable to compete in the fierce worldwide markets for tradable goods. According to WTO (2001), tourism is one the strongest economic activities in the world, involving around 650 million people, representing over 462 billion $US dollars business and with a 3% annual increase rate.

Following an official report by Gouveia and Duarte (2001), the European tourism share goes up to 60% of the entire international flows though it seems to be shifting from "sun and sea" Mediterranean and South European regions to eastern emerging destinies such as Poland, Check Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Still believing in Klein (2001), 9% of consumption expenses in EU are made through tourism, involving over 9 million persons and 2 million businesses.

Furthermore tourism activities are crucial to produce direct and indirect effects while they involve a set of important sectors and activities that still depend on employment, able to absorb an important share of the industrial unemployment in declining regions. This means that countries and regions should look at tourist destinies as a composite product enabling regional and urban development and thus, requiring efficient differentiation strategies. As a whole, this economic activity raises a new special attraction for local political parties and mayor candidates.

Yet, tourism research has to deal with some unsolved problems at some extent with very tricky data issue because Statistical Institutes and National Accounting Systems use to catch the sector indicators through two branches (Accommodation and Restaurant Services), namely by the number of hotel night sleeping and served meals in restaurants [I.N.E. (2005). But we now tourism is much more than this: *"The visitor is recognized as the basic unit which undertakes a tourism activity. This activity occurs mainly during trips, but it might also have effects before and after (purchases before and after a trip)"* often done in the tourist residence area, as stated in WTO (2001).

Another kind of problem is the high probability that tourist local expenses will easily leak to more developed regions due to lower diversified economic activity in destiny places. Hence one need to approach tourism strategies in lagged regions as a cluster activity requiring excellence in networking and complementarity planning among local/regional stakeholders.

2. Literature Review

Krugman and Venables (1995) state that globalization runs for cycles and even if the first cycle will produce a divergent development, lagged regions will reach equilibrium on subsequent cycles. Meanwhile they should prepare the right environment conditions for development to happen. As considered in the introductory section, regions or/and countries revealing strong difficulties to survive during this first cycle wave in the fierce international trade competition, tend to fall dependant on others and namely on national government and EU structural funds. Moreover those are the regions that were not prepared to play leadership or entrepreneurial roles to face their future. The parsimonious attitude leads most of those country lagged regions to hide themselves behind the protectionist policies where private sectors invested in real estate and the public sector ran to get funding to provide the basic public services they required.

To a large extent, EU agriculture policy reinforced this adverse situation, subsidizing those who did not produce and never touched the main structural problems of property dimension to exploit extensive cultures and training people to absorb technological innovations. As a consequence, boarder regions in the Iberian Peninsula suffered the strong migration pulling effect, turning agriculture on an abandoned asset, opening new chances for fires to devastate empty forest, environment and rural landscapes.

This was the great mistake of EU agriculture and regional policies along the 20 year integration period (1986 – 2006) of Portugal and Spain.

Therefore, tourism destinies easily became a kind of fashion opportunity described in several national/international agenda reports.

According to the EU Commission (2003), most of those regions should look to the structure and performance of entrepreneurial activities in the sector; Gouveia and Duarte (2001) in their official report adverted in the same direction. In so doing, small municipalities start thinking to order several sector or territorial strategic plans to develop their territories, even if they had not a leading viewpoint. They saw it as an expected way to get cheaper funding during the next forthcoming EU Support Framework (IV): tourism for poor regions to offset the lost in the remaining activities.

Until very recently D.G.T. (2006), there wasn't any official document with policy recommendations or simple indications to the economic agents so they could organize the tourism sector; furthermore, no theoretical approaches were developed for these regions.

While preparing a concrete Strategic Plan for Tourism in a mountain region the literature review done by the author raised some very important questions to acknowledge during our time period work (2003-2006).

In fact, Gollub *et al.* (2003) referred the major importance one should give to tourism destiny as a local multi-product allowing qualified initiatives to develop other sectors and small activities, considering the agents will be able to (net)work together. One would like to refer an older but very useful reference from Newman (1966), expert in psychological behaviour theory, sustaining there is an increasing willingness revealed by tourist consumers in order to experience mostly pleasant and unique experiences. According to this trend in behavioural analysis, "mouth to mouth" marketing strategies should be considered as highly important once one "bad" actor can destroy an entire global territorial strategy based on a detailed networking and trustable training provided by the tourism managing institution.

Authors like Murphy and Murphy (2004) alerted to the danger of market misinterpretations, neglecting future negative externalities due to local and foreign (tourists) people conflicting due to their different interests. In their thought, experts should be aware of this conflict when preparing any planning process, in order to provide high levels for services quality and to sustain the performance and quality of life of the destiny area residents simultaneously.

This was the basic theoretical framework embedding the planning process we experienced over the last 3 years as coordinator consultant demanded by ten municipalities located in the highest mountain region in Portugal.

3. Tourism planning: a phenomenological approach to innovation diffusion

As an economist and researcher in regional and urban development, I intended to explore this opportunity[1] to experience and develop some knowledge in my field of interest: institutional networks and innovation diffusion processes, connected with organizational learning and self organization processes in socio-economic complex systems. The theoretical background comes from authors that should be quoted as a

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[1] The invitation came from the University Dean, in order to coordinate the Team in charge to prepare a Strategic Plan for Tourism, required by a "ten contiguous municipality consortium" funded by the Government with EU structural funds.

major intellectual influence to prepare the team work we did: Sonis (1991, (2002), Keeney (1992) and Gollub *et al.* (2003).

The first one because he is a very experienced researcher in applied mathematical models to social sciences and argues that there are new emerging properties in Complex Social Economic Systems; moreover there is the superposition principle when different individuals join together for collective action. When someone belongs to a group that will have to make choices (decide) either you have a collective action as an *Homo Socialis*, making individual choices within this collective or acting as the traditional *Homo Oeconomicus* deciding alone as he thinks he has got all the needed information to decide among other alternatives. Defining the collective as a group of persons with common values, common modes of behaviour and common modes of choice, the collective will "impose" the values on their members and if one member do not follow them he will enter a process of ostracism and competitive exclusion.

At the same time there is the superposition principle. The collective Utility function is constructed by a stepwise process (repeating steps) where each individual perform by changing the decisions in contact with other "experts". Utility function will then represent a discrete and highly individual choice but the group will never reach a global Utility function. Individual means that each member will still perceive information its own way.

In this sense, innovators will be those members trying to convert preferable alternatives into the captive alternative (adopted automatically, parsimoniously, with no special effort), which is an asset either positive or negative, depending on the way it will be used to create motivation and organization of innovation spread, supplying knowledge of Human collective values once motivation includes the Human values like sustainability, reciprocity, respect (positive), or the other way around he will manipulate, worsening off the collective future, because he does not acknowledge for the Human values.

The second author has been working in the detail on correct problem identification, alerting to the importance to focus on the process so the innovators or experts adequately identify the real problem demanders (collective) want to solve. In fact, Keeney (1992) adverts the task is not that easy to understand, but it is very important if one can motivate people to outperform if they really succeed to explain what they really want to do/achieve with the project. There are a number of plans that will not succeed

because the very first question (problem) is not correctly asked. In this specific case, every stakeholder expressed the (apparently) collective idea they wanted from the consultant team: "*tell us what we should do in order to develop our municipalities through tourism activity*". Further on, in the next section, we will evaluate the process and we'll see this was not the case.

The third group of authors developed interesting ideas on deepening cluster analysis, considering their specific attributes and life cycles stages, which is not that common in specific cluster literature. Gollub *et al.* (2003) approach the cluster analysis for tourism, enhancing the differences against other commodity productive sectors, especially in lagged regions where income leakages represent a special type of economic problems with utmost influence on the collective organizational process.

Mattsson *et al.* (2005) will be the last reference once they raise a type of model trying to bridge the gap between innovation and tradition, defining the set of actors that can play important roles in the networking activities within the community. In their experience it is considered as crucial to be able clarifying the main regional/local tourism attraction, leaving all the rest to a kind of 'theatre action', with a script, a scenario, a content explanation, and all the market agents will know to take advantage from the scene; anyway, their action will be positive as far as they do not destroy the main elements of the constructed scenario enable the region/local to provide new and real innovative (emotional and affective) experiences for the visitors/tourists.

Unfortunately, in a number of studied cases the dominant trend is that, acting free, agents will explore in a very short period of time all the resources. They often build new infrastructures for accommodation and food that, besides being a very small part of the tourism supply, usually has nothing to do with environmental quality of the place.

History contents, verbal tradition and GIS were also important resources we used to undertake the diagnosis stage, and provided very helpful, new and valuable information to the whole set of stakeholders.

4. Descriptive and evaluative analysis

Portugal is characterized to have a single city region over 3.5 million inhabitants. There are another dozen of cities ranging from 100 to 150 million inhabitants, located at the Atlantic coast and he most part of the others spread across the country in the fringe between 20 to 35 million.

That is the case of the small municipality's members of the consortium (ranging from 4.500 to 55.000 inhabitants) presented in Figures 1 and 2 below.
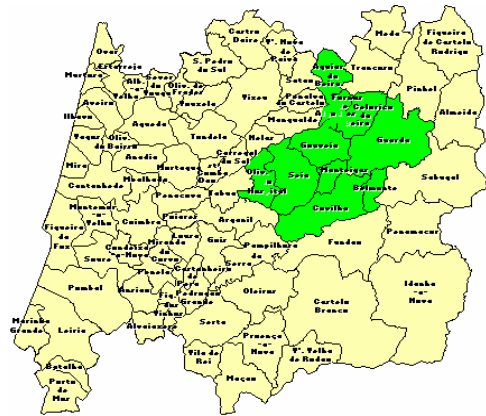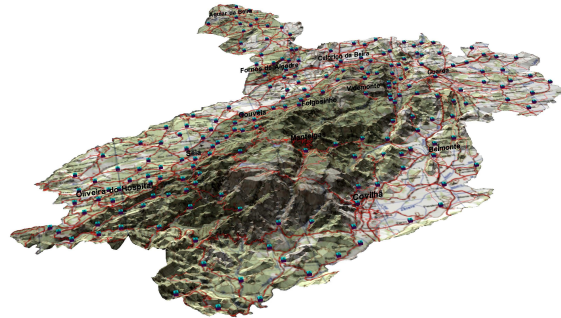
Figure 1 – The Portugal Central region   Figure 2 – The mountain region 3D

All the municipalities present a few common features:

a) All the few development projects suffer from the "copy cat effect", imitating the western coast model of the country; they consider themselves poor and mistreated by the central governments; the regular and historical attitude for almost the last 50 years weakened residents creativity and overwhelmed individual resistance to change deepening the aversion to risk effects on investments;

b) Persistent during decades, the elite members migrated and mayors have been easily controlled by political parties and their party rules; this attitude rather than helping to develop citizen participation in the discussion of crucial collective problems, it lead to leave the decisions to the mayor himself;

c) This picture helped to transmit an external image of a weak and self unconfident labor pool that disincentive potential national or foreign direct investment.

Surely, Portugal has a great tourism potential because as a very small country in EU context it has a great geographical and landscape diversity within a very short path. This characteristic means a very high strength to develop sustainable tourism destinies from North to South and from West to the Spanish boarder, as far as they complement each other.

Spain has powerful regions mediating central and local powers, whereas Portugal does not have intermediate level administration.

On one side, this is one main reason to explain higher divergence among countries/regions: all the relevant EU information on regional funds flows asymmetrically through economic agents; in the lagged regions, where public sector plays a very important role among institutions Carvalho (2002), individual personalities networked within their political parties are dominant. Training human resources at the

regional level is dependent on citizen expertise, on interest organized associations and on University influence; hence, training depends a lot on the ability institutions demonstrate to access the cohesion EU funds, which means the task is difficult and connected with political power informational networking. Projects are mostly used to cover ("independently") hidden lobbying interests, acting as a barrier to organizational learning and training[2].

On the other side, all the EU countries know they can not develop the whole without social cohesion and, as explained before, Portuguese central government easily tends to fall in national contradictory policy: first, rushing to prepare the whole country for international competitive markets (over 65% of the population and GDP located in the Atlantic coast); second, to guarantee social cohesion in the whole country. This twofold pressure - economic theory ordering to invest in the places most likely to perform and institutional historical/cultural path requiring subsidies to bridge the divergence gap – implies consumption sacrifice for all and budget leftovers for some. The consequence is an excellent opening field to increase the worst of predator competition among those small counties, restricting innovative visions they should promote. Therefore, without working together, networking and complementing investment efforts to really levering infrastructure quality, efficiency and location decisions, adding the citizen "still remaining" traditional knowledge, will difficult to build possible regional competitive advantages.

Nobody can really measure the amount of waste caused by repeated infrastructural investments located in a place and, at the same time, in all their neighbors to pay-off political loyalties[3]. Do all the financial constraints coming both from national and the EU governance really matters?

The national government Resolutions brought some positive signs[4]. The Program for Public Administration Reform (known as PRACE), the National Strategic Priorities Framework for 2007-2013 (known as QREN), the National Strategic Plan for Tourism

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[2] In the case, the project started with one mayor initiative that needed a strategic plan (pre-condition) requested to apply for UNESCO Human Natural Patrimony, to classify the unique glacier valley located in its territory, as a tourism marketing strategy; however he did not realize the constraint implications the process will have on real estate promoting.

[3] Asking the mayors about the willingness to work with the first neighbors to decide infrastructure location, their positive answers never happened even when the team pushed for the needed meetings.
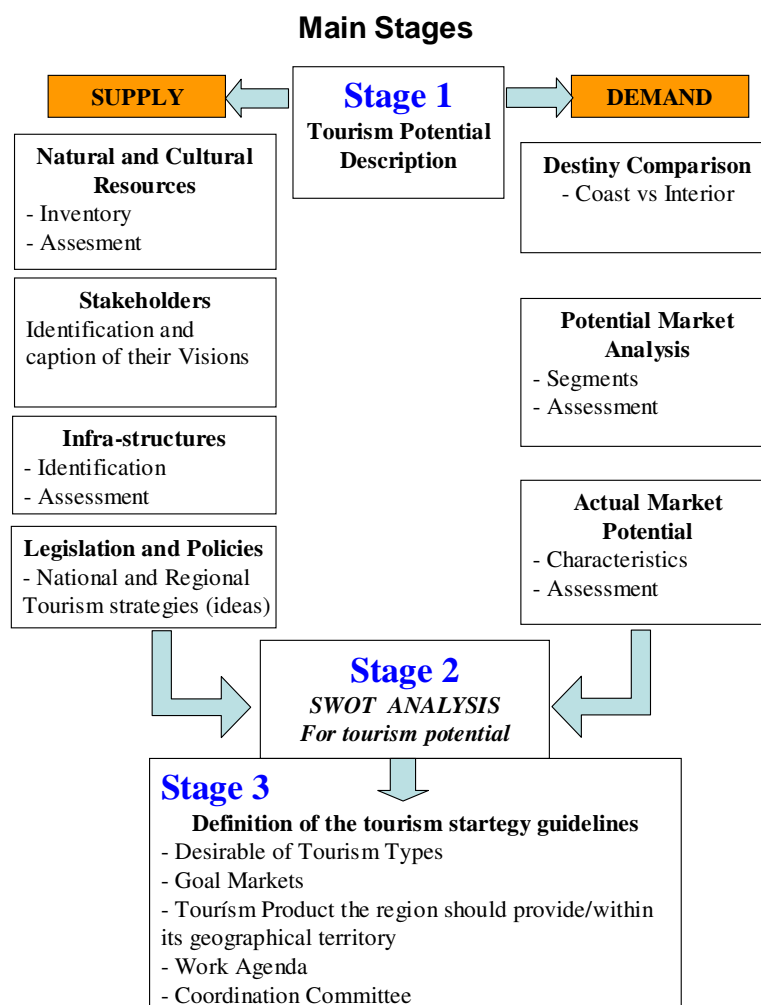
[4] We say positive, considering the immediate reaction coming from the most well known spenders at the regional/local levels.

(known as PENT) and the forthcoming Law to transfer budget funds to the municipalities, are some of the signs something will have to change.

Those documents were inexistent at the time we started the teamwork (2003).

For all the remaining project we developed mostly common strategic analysis, extensively documented in the field literature [Barthes (2005); Comissão (2002); D.G.T. (2006); Gaspar (2001); Klein (2001); Mattsson *et al.* (2005); Murphy and Murphy (2004); Porth (2003); Ritchie and Crouch (2003); States (1997)] with an added effort reinforcing the initiatives to promote stakeholder participation (great number of local visits, workshops, direct inquiries and interviews in order to find the main conflict aspects among different agent Utility functions, resisting to captive behaviour of innovation diffusion. That is summarized for descriptive purpose in Figure 3:

Figure 3 – Main Stages in the Mountain Region Planning

Main Stages

| SUPPLY | Stage 1 Tourism Potential Description | DEMAND |

Natural and Cultural Resources
- Inventory
- Assesment

Destiny Comparison
- Coast vs Interior

Stakeholders
Identification and caption of their Visions

Potential Market Analysis
- Segments
- Assessment

Infra-structures
- Identification
- Assessment

Actual Market Potential
- Characteristics
- Assessment

Legislation and Policies
- National and Regional Tourism strategies (ideas)

Stage 2
SWOT ANALYSIS
For tourism potential

Stage 3
Definition of the tourism startegy guidelines
- Desirable of Tourism Types
- Goal Markets
- Tourísm Product the region should provide/within its geographical territory
- Work Agenda
- Coordination Committee

Source: PETUR Final Report, 2006, June 29th.

From a Regional Economics viewpoint, we developed the possible calculus[5] in order to get some main indicators that could help them to find the principal activities to match to foster tourism destiny within a cluster approach: location quotients, regional accounts for the specific region driven from the National Table 2000 and a (rough) prediction for all the multiplier effects impacted by future investments in regional tourism.

5. The key issues in tourism strategy

5.1. How can the collective identify the problem to solve?

As said before the most difficult issue is to manage the learning process we need to proxy a collective Utility function considering we have different stakeholders, several competitive mayors, diversified public entities, mountain lovers and a set of very different perceptions about the roles they should play in order to "run their own businesses adding value to the collective".

Although the team tried very hard to join them in the same rooms or in the several discussion meetings we promoted in every municipality, it was barely possible to have them together at the same time. As a matter of fact, the role tourism played on each one of them preferences hierarchy is very different. But the media are now (5 months later) reproducing some initiatives that fit the final Plan recommendations. Let's hope the learning process started.

For a very long time this region was known as the Portuguese Manchester because of the dominance of the textile industry[6]; it is also known as the unique snow region in the country and any of the tourism public entities ever solved the competitive regional disadvantage raised after the 60's, when "sun and sea" in Algarve pulled the great majority of the international tourism flows. This constitutes a huge challenge to all the stakeholders and contiguous mayors in the region, because it raises several misinterpretations, barely carried without non strategic and collective approaches and mostly embedded in biased county rivalries.

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[5] If one considers the number of constraints coming from old databases (2000) and no regional *I-O* table.

[6] Marquês de Pombal (1699-1782), responsible for the Methwen Treaty (1703-4), world known through D. Ricardo Comparative Advantage Theory, was the Secretary for Foreign Affairs during D. José I kingdom (after 1750). He was the visionary that planned Lisbon rebuilding after the 1755 Earthquake. Responsible for an aggressive competitive trade policy, he planned the Real Fábrica dos Panos (1763-69), the major textile factory in this mountain region, offering a share on imports taxes for public utility to the town, promoting competition against the British textile industry supremacy. Nowadays, the building is converted in the main University building since 1978.

5.2. How does public administration dealt with the Project?

First of all, it did not really consider the problem along time, despite a very timid trial of a territorial approach promoted after 2001 and without regional administration. National policies were designed for economic branches and decentralized in a plethora of public entities for each subject: agriculture, education, forestry, justice, territory, tourism and so forth, never matched the same counties or NUT (the EU statistical unity considered as a set of municipalities, based on geographical proximities).

In order one can imagine the difficult situation we faced, the "10 municipality's consortium" was built to apply for Structural EU Funds to a decentralized entity (named AIBT) created in the beginning of the 21st century. At the same time, this same territory depends on administrative (unmatched) public entities responsible for agricultural, educational, tourism promotion, environmental, infrastructural, transports and other policies!!! It is now easy to understand the complexity of this socioeconomic complex system, while every one of those public principals (directors) will never agreed to give their opinion for the same issue when related with other (out) territories.

In tourism economy we know the benefits are never distributed according to any administrative design of the territory; in fact, to raise tourism receipts you just need to make tourists stay and spend longer within the whole region. This requires a cluster approach, where every agent must develop the business according to their competitive advantages, considering she will always benefit from touring. Moreover, in this case, because the biggest tourism attractors are: the beauty of the mountain (fig.3), the Spanish boarder proximity and the hub role played by one of the 10 municipalities, where the two recently built highways N-S and W-E cross. Every agent within or out the consortium can profit from that in tourism as far as they have entrepreneurial mind.

The most part of the mountain (over 110.000 ha) is part of a National Park, fortunately protected since the last 30 years, against the expansionist promoters behaviour allowed by 3 main confluent municipalities.

How can we deal with such a complicated set of Utility functions where everyone wants to profit by attracting investments to their territory as a substitute of the region as a whole? And how could we manage the learning process if all the public managers act exactly the same way, with alternate allowance of two main political parties, paying-off their loyalty over time?

5.3. Motivation coming from values or alternatives?

In the very first interviews mayors were asked about their "tourism visions" for the next 10 years; most of them answered with a list of investments they need!!!

In the theoretical referential (3rd section) one of the influent quoted authors, is very clear about this issue: "*values and not available alternatives must be the focus for all the strategies*" in Keeney (1992)

The diagnosis stage of the project previewed to present to the stakeholders a (quite long) GIS list of the natural, cultural, patrimony, human and other regional resources collected from a detailed research on secondary and primary sources. The main goal was to get a common set of attributes underlying the definition of a unique methodology that could help to identify the main regional tourism attractions, providing the necessary background to find the adjusted market demand segments. Still according to Keeney (1992), we knew the focus for any economic strategy is the combination of the two sides of the market (supply-demand); in tourism strategies people got used to leave infrastructural provision to the public sector; but even then, local resident behaviour is definitely decisive in order to work together, sustaining the environmental and empathy conditions needed to behave like a sincere and pure host destiny. Thus, community involvement was unavoidable. The same to say politics must be ethical, considering different viewpoints and opening a comfortable space for residents to participate. Gardeners, policeman, public attendants, teachers, students, families, public transport workforce, taxi drivers, information offices and so forth are part of the whole host community. Despite this, politicians were not aware of this very sharp difference between tourism and other sector regional planning; therefore, their preferable alternatives were based on their own individual choices unlike based on a participative and learning self organization process. Tourism stakeholders in small lagged regions did not discover the powerfulness of debating and discover "hidden" objectives among uneducated people yet; they are not used to think like entrepreneurs but mostly act and think as if they were tourists in other places where they have been; rather than valuing the place they live in, they think as substandard people.

Summing up, we can not have the willingness to build a mountain tourism destiny if we are not emotionally and affectively involved with the place and the tourism imaginary; thus one can not see the uniqueness of the place for people who never visited similar sites.

5.4. Have we got the right human resources?

Economic theory explains labour force flows from low wage to high wages regions. However, this explanation is not as much as necessary any longer for all the regions and countries. People follow new job opportunities but labour market is crossing huge and brand new challenges. Although more qualified people are coming out from the Universities, employment still is an important macroeconomic goal across Europe because unemployment increase has different meanings.

Firms and workers are overwhelmingly different, maybe because Universities do not provide the right training for the new worldwide evolution with exponential information flows faster than individual perception and organizational knowledge.

A number of hotel and restaurant managers complained during the meetings on how difficult it is for them to retain the best practitioners once national and international (*e.g.* Switzerland) demand is higher in big cities and in traditional Portuguese "sun and sea" tourism destinies. They can not afford to pay such salaries and if they try to teach them in the mountain context using their own facilities, one day they will end up leaving.

How they intended to overcome this threshold of sufficient preparation? The answer was blank and innovative motivation ideas did not showed up.

Considering the mountain strategy intends to provide global answers to the whole region, it is possible to think in different solutions for accommodation and lodging than those they are used to. If nature, culture, environment, landscape, water, riversides and downhill adventures are too physically demanding, it is possible that 'new' tourists will require different spots to rest and rebuild their physical and mental strengths for the next days. Maybe one should think about higher quality, differentiation rather than quantity and homogenously hosting. Big city hotels are not the right answer and there is a great deal to discover how to manage these new needs, so far.

Throughout in-depth tourist inquiring we also discovered that what they really expected was different places to accommodate. Instead getting rooms in a town Hotel they revealed preference for small, quiet and well located places where they could reach natural trails and enjoy the diversity landscapes mountain regions could offer them. Tourism demand segments are definitely different in mountain regions than in urban, gambling or/and "sun and sea" destinies. This requires a brand new approach to discover what kind of workers and entrepreneurs the region needed. In fact, there are a number of people living in big cities (DINK) either in Portugal or Spain starting to

demand old places, farms and peculiar spots around the region. These are the new kind of entrepreneurs the mountain regions need.

Learning that, the next step is to feel the pleasure to be located in two centres (considering travelling distances) of an Iberian triangle with vertices in 3 big cities such as Madrid, Oporto and Lisbon, and then close (south) to Douro and (north) Alentejo (winery regions), the most developing tourism regions attracting foreign and national investments.

With this learning process we tried to make stakeholders to understand that from a peripheral region (in Portugal) we could look at it as a new opportunity to be closer to the middle of the Iberian Peninsula, which asks for new learning/training/organizing practices, centred in different tourists interests, creating new trails where visitors could find new and never seen places, persons, cultures and commodities.

In the end we pushed people to a new cluster perception of the tourism industry, clearly connected with new contents, opening new work competences and jobs. There is a need for historians, for energy saving experts, appropriate building designers, in order to rebuild old towns and small abandoned villages where young people could figure out new careers, using new attractive informational tools and learning how to get connected with their territory, affective and emotionally using foreign appraisal.

We named this strategy as a "new training trend", or "learning in context" within new self organized institutions.

5.5. How to reach the region: accessibilities, road signs and marketing

As someone commented, there is a huge problem of accessibilities (physical and informational). The answer is not ready. How do we intend to compete with similar mountain regions with greater traditions in EU? How are we going to bring people here?

We think that these weaknesses can be overcome, looking them as new challenges and new business flourishing opportunities. Is it too romantic? We do not think so if we learn how to use internet, with who should we make joint ventures adding value to traditional chain productions, using clean transport facilities and marketing it through the right channels.

Of course one needs to internationalize the activities through new homework tasks[7] using the internet and clearly identifying the demanders for this type of tourism, organizing events and scientific meetings, thinking on the new century issues: facilities for disabled persons, activities especially designed for new pensioners, sport and cultural events, using environmental and natural facilities and requiring a new type of experts in human performance behaviour and total quality of life management.

Nothing will be done without effort, but the main accessibilities are there, turning the region 2.5 hours distant from highly populated regions and important airports.

Surely this is one of the biggest issues that the region should pay attention: tourism is a cluster activity and will not solve the divergence if resident people will not think large and open minded.

Concluding remarks

This is a seminal paper to approach tourism as an important economic activity posing problems of deepening Complexity within Socioeconomic Complex Systems, using the notions of Complication and Superposition Principle in Self Organization for innovation diffusion as Sonis (2002) name it.

After researching Institutional Social Networks Carvalho (2002), and sustainable development in regional economics Couto *et al.* (2006), the life experiments I worked in, improved the author perception of complexity in socio-economic systems and organizational behaviour.

Through strategic planning and the interaction with several economic agents to build collective action raised important issues that the author thinks can not be solved through mainstream economics frameworks, due to the strong (simplistic) constraints they apply to model real human behaviour.

The life experiment the author lived cleared the idea that organizational learning process is a stepwise procedure raising important issues in order to match the main roles different kinds of leadership behaviour can play for speeding innovation diffusion spread through space and time, requiring new deepening of complexity with different

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[7] In one of the mountain lover meetings, someone told the story that transformed his life. He announced in an international site fly-fishing tournaments (trout) in a very small river up in the mountain and a relevant number of Japanese and Finnish fishermen came because it was coincident with their forbidden period to fish in their countries. It happens they stayed for a two week period and start to marketing it "mouth to mouth". He left the public job he has and runs a new business now!

approaches commonly used in exact sciences methodologies such as Physics, Astronomy, Informatics and other.

The aim of this paper was to boost a more tuned and comprehensive perception of some key issues in strategic tourism planning.

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